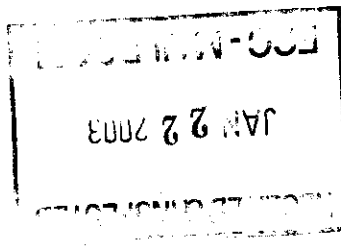


October 21, 2002

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EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

02-277

Chairman Michael Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

JAN 28 2003

Dear FCC Chairman Michael Powell,

Distribution Center

I am writing to urge you to strengthen, not repeal, the few remaining rules that prevent near total concentration of ownership in the clutches of a few corporations. The current domination of the radio, broadcast and newspaper industries by a handful of companies is already damaging our democracy. Already dramatically loosened over the past decade, ownership restrictions that, for example, keep a single television network from owning stations that broadcast to more than 35 percent of the nation's homes or a single company from owning more than eight radio stations in the same market, are crucially important if we are to protect our nation from the very real dangers of media monopolies.

As America's Founding Fathers understood, a free, diverse and vigorous press is a necessary bedrock foundation for a functioning democracy. In recent decades, however, responsible news coverage and the presentation of a broad range of political views have become increasingly threatened. Corporate chains now control nearly all radio and television stations. Massive budget cutbacks for news departments, the dumbing-down of political coverage, and even dangerous demagoguery have become the norm in America's mainstream media.

Those private interests who support gutting the FCC's media ownership regulations point to new media avenues like cable television and the Internet. Here, too, however, we find the same handful of familiar names dominating what information the vast majority of Americans receive on a daily basis. The massive telecommunications lobby defends repeal of ownership regulations as a source of new business "efficiencies," yet it is the FCC's responsibility to defend the rights of consumers not corporations.

As part of your 90-day comment period, I am asking you to stand up for the free marketplace of ideas supported by a free, diverse and independent press by supporting and strengthening current limits on media ownership consolidation.

I also want to urge you in the strongest way to reach out to ordinary citizens to hear their views, rather than to the well-paid lobbyists of those who stand to benefit financially from changing the FCC's rules. I look forward to hearing where you stand on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Selena Polston (Selena Polston)
Steve Schwartz (Steve Schwartz)